

reportedly firing at whites as they ran. Although it was difficult for black men to purchase weapons in the weeks and months just prior to the election, many already owned weapons for hunting or personal safety. Men identified in papers as wounded at Fourth and Harnett intersection were Alfred White, William Lindsay, and Sam McFarland. Men identified as dead at Fourth and Harnett were John Townsend (Townsell?), Charles Lindsay (aka Silas Brown), William Mouzon, and John L. Gregory. Whites identified as being at the scene were S. Hill Terry (armed with double-barrel shot gun loaded with buck shot), Theodore Curtis, N. B. Chadwick (armed with a 16-shot Colt or Remington rifle), Sam Matthews (armed with a .44 caliber Navy rifle), and George Piner.⁶⁰

After the first shots were fired, a streetcar entered the business section in downtown from Brooklyn, and the conductor told men gathered there that blacks had shot into the car. Men crowded into the car bound for Brooklyn at the stop on Fourth at Harnett.⁶¹ One of the “first responders” was Captain Donald MacRae of Company K, fresh from the tense situation at Sprunt’s Compress. MacRae recalled that once he arrived in Brooklyn after hearing reports of fighting, he began to establish a skirmish line with other white men in the area. He was stopped by another man because he was still a captain of Company K in the U. S. Army and white leaders thought

that he should not be involved in case the president investigated the participants.⁶²



Bernice Moore's Drug Store, 901 N. Fourth Street. Moore called for assistance of the military from his store and white victims Mayo, Piner, and Chadwick received medical attention from Dr. Schonwald. Image: New Hanover County Public Library

Having feared the worst in the weeks prior to the election, leaders Roger Moore and Walker Taylor had developed a strategy for quelling potential violence by stationing contacts throughout the city with instructions to notify Taylor and Moore if trouble ignited. The contact in the Fourth Street area near Harnett was Bernice Moore at his drug store at 901 North Fourth Street. Moore was instructed by J. Allan Taylor of the Secret Nine to sound the “riot alarm” to alert the WLI and Naval Reserves in the event of violence. As soon as shots were heard, Moore called the armory to inform the leaders there that shots were being fired in Brooklyn. Once the riot alarm was sounded, Walker Taylor declared martial law, and the WLI and the Naval Reserves began to make their way into the Brooklyn neighborhood.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Wilmington Messenger*, November 11, 1898; *Morning Star* (Wilmington), November 11, 1898; Hayden, *WLI*, 88-89, 91; McDuffie “Politics in Wilmington,” 741; Prather, *Democracy Betrayed*, 32

⁶¹ Prather, *We Have Taken a City*, 118-119.

⁶² “Minutes of the Association of the WLI,” North Carolina Collection.

⁶³ McDuffie, “Politics in Wilmington,” 719.